AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Amended) A method for ~~outputing~~ <u>outputting</u> recommended preferences based on predetermined preferences, the method executing on a computer system, the computer system including a processor, database, an input device and an output device, wherein the database includes a plurality of datafiles each containing a plurality of preferences, the method comprising the following steps:

accepting signals from the input device to indicate a plurality of user preferences;

using the processor to search the database and to determine the number of user preferences that match preferences in a given datafile;

using the processor to identify datafiles with a number of matching preferences above a first threshold number;

selecting preferences from the identified datafiles, wherein the selected preferences do not match the user preferences; and

~~outputing~~ <u>outputting</u>, by means of the output device, the selected preferences.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preference is an artist's name.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preference is the title of a movie.

4.   (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the computer system further includes a data communications network<u>, a first user input device, and a second user input device</u>, wherein the processor, database, first user input device, second user input device and output device are coupled to the network, wherein the first and second user input devices are remotely located from each other.

5.   (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the "selecting preferences" step further comprises the substeps of

(a)   for each unmatching preference in the identified datafiles, determining the number of other preferences in the identified datafiles that match ~~it~~ <u>the umatching preference</u> and assigning the determined number to the preference; and

(b)   using the processor to select one or more unmatching preferences with the highest assigned numbers.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the number of preferences in a datafile is limited to 10, and wherein the first threshold number is 5.

7. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the number of preferences in a datafile is limited to 10, and wherein only those unmatching preferences that also appear in 50% or more of the identified data files are selected in substep (b).

8. (Amended) An apparatus for identifying preferences, the apparatus comprising

a processor;

a database coupled to the processor;

means, coupled to the processor, for accepting signals to indicate first and second preferences;

means, coupled to the processor, for creating an association between the first and second preferences and for storing the first and second preferences in the database as a first datafile;

means, coupled to the processor, for accepting signals to indicate a user preference, wherein the user preference is the same as the first preference;

means, coupled to the processor, for determining that the user preference matches the first preference;

means, coupled to the processor, for retrieving the a correlated second preference from the database; and

an output device, coupled to the processor, for outputing outputting the second preference.

9. (Amended) A method for recommending music selections based on a user's preferred music selections, the method including a computer system, the computer system including a database, input device and output device, the method comprising the following steps:

storing a plurality of associated music selections in the database;

accepting signals from the user input device to indicate a plurality, m, of a user's preferred music selections;

using the processor to determine that a number, n, of the preferred music selections match with the associated music selections in the database;

using the processor to determine the number of unmatched associated music selections in the database; and

outputing outputting, by means of the output device, the unmatched associated music selections.

10.   (Amended) An apparatus for recommending music selections based on a user's preferred music selections, the apparatus comprising:

a computer system including a database;

means for storing a plurality of associated music selections in the database;

means for accepting signals from the user input device to indicate a plurality, m, of a user's preferred music selections;

means for determining that a number, n, of the preferred music selections match with the associated music selections in the database;

means for determining the number of unmatched associated music selections in the database; and

means for outputing outputting the unmatched associated music selections.

11.   (Amended) A method for outputing outputting an ordered list of recommended objects based on an input object, the computer system including a processor, database, input device and an output device, the method comprising the following steps:

using the processor to store pairs of ranked objects in the database;

using the processor to assign a ranking number to each of the pairs of ranked objects and storing the ranking number as associated with the pair;

accepting signals from the input device to indicate an object;

using the processor to find occurrences of the selected object in the pairs of ranked objects;

for each pair in which the selected object occurs, determining the object in the pair that does not match the selected object;

using the processor to order non-matching objects into a list according to the ranking number for the pair that the non-matching object belongs to; and

outputing outputting the list as an ordered list of recommended objects.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein each object is an artist's name.

13.   (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein each object is the title of a movie.

14.   (Amended) An apparatus for ~~outputing~~ outputting an ordered list of recommended objects based on an input object, the apparatus comprising:

a computer system, the computer system including a processor, and a database, wherein the processor is coupled to the database;

pairing means, coupled to the processor, for storing pairs of ranked objects in the database;

ranking means for assigning a ranking number to each of the pairs of ranked objects and storing a given ranking number as associated with a given stored pair;

input means, coupled to the processor, for accepting signals from a human user to indicate a selected object;

finding means for finding occurrences of the selected object in the pairs of ranked objects;

determining means for determining, for each pair, the object in the pair that does not match the selected object;

ordering means for ordering non-matching objects into a list according to the ranking number for the pair that the non-matching object belongs to; and

output means, coupled to the processor, for ~~outputing~~ outputting the list as an ordered list of recommended objects.